THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

February/March 2023 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

E. Pluribus Unum

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

On my second of six trips to Israel/Palestine, I happened upon an annual celebration called "Jerusalem Day," which I assumed would be an affirmation of the diverse peoples in that ancient city. Unfortunately, the lengthy parade turned out to be a Zionist celebration that ignored Palestinian Muslims and Christians. Instead of a reminder of the rich holiness of the city, it brought to mind the Unionist marches in Northern Ireland which not only ignore Irish Catholics, but also humiliate and intimidate them.

On my first trip, while in the Israeli-occupied town of Beit Sahour, next to Bethlehem, I saw a Palestinian teenagers' rally for independence broken up by Israeli soldiers firing tear gas and rubber coated steel bullets. To protect me and the other human rights workers whom I was traveling with, a Palestinian woman invited us all into her home. Fluent in English, Arabic, and Hebrew, she told us that, in years gone by, she enjoyed many Jewish friends only to be disappointed to see them all enter the Israeli military and participate in brutal attacks like the massacre of Palestinian refugees during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. When she asked her friends, "How could you attack Palestinians?" they replied, "Our friendship with you is important, but we are still Israelis first."

E Pluribus Unum

She went on to tell us that after Israeli soldiers subsequently broke into her house and smashed all of the windows, she told the captain in perfect Hebrew, "The Nazis taught you how to hate, and now you are teaching us." She confessed to us that she still wanted to live in peace with Jews, but almost daily injustices of the occupation acted as a growing monster killing hope for peace in her heart .

Shortly after the 1993 Peace Accords which created the Palestinian Authority, I rejoiced to see posters displaying the Palestinian and Israeli flags crossed over peace doves. Optimism abounded. Business and cultural exchanges did too.

Unfortunately, continued expansion of Jewish-only settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, along with lethal raids by Israeli soldiers, soured the mood. Despairing Palestinians resorted to suicide bombings which ultimately led Israel to construct an impregnable wall which seized Palestinian land and isolated millions of Palestinians. Since then, far fewer Palestinians speak Hebrew or have Jewish associates and friends. For many in the West Bank and Gaza, the only Jews they ever encounter are soldiers whom they see as intent on harming them.

Hope for peace briefly resurfaced in 2005 when Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip, but was quashed when it became clear that, in concert with Egypt, Israel

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Five Reasons Catholic Workers Should Read James Baldwin

By Claire Schaeffer-Duffy

All right, I could list more than five, but a looming deadline and limited word count confine me to this number.

1. **He understood the inestimable value of the human being.** No label, no slogan, no skin color, indeed no religion was more important, he believed. This conviction permeates his writing and animates his fury over racism or any ideology that negates our God-given worth.

2. **He suffered in a hundred ways and still believed in beauty and mercy**. Racism, his step-father's violence, sexual predators, there was much in life that menaced Baldwin. Born in poverty in Harlem, he was Black and gay during a time when those identities guaranteed persecution. Baldwin writes personally about what he endured while recognizing the humanity of his perpetrators. Catholic Workers struggling with bitterness or despair over sufferings, observed or known, will appreciate how he walks through both to get to another place.

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Baldwin

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3. **He could hold rage and love in the same hand.** "I have more anger in my little finger than you will ever know," Dorothy Day allegedly said when someone asked if she ever struggled with anger. Baldwin might answer similarly. He was piercing in his exposés of how racism diseased American society. He understood the separatist ambitions of the Nation of Islam and the militancy of the Black Power movement. He also understood that we who despise one another are inevitably connected. "I would like us to do something unprecedented," he wrote in 1967, "to create ourselves without finding it necessary to create an enemy."

4. **He understood structural sin AND personal responsibility.** Reckoning is a constant theme for Baldwin. His writings urge us to face our collective deception and self-deceptions as well. No group or individual are exempt from such scrutiny, he believed. Love requires honesty. In his essay, "Letter from a Region in my Mind," he wrote that people "always seem to band together according to a principle that has nothing to do with love, a principle that releases them from personal responsibility."

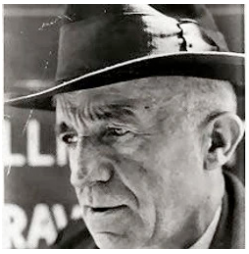
5. **He wrote to give witness.** In the late 1940's, Baldwin fled to Paris, finding the US an impossible place to live. He returned many times. In 1957, during the heat of the civil rights struggle, he traveled South to write about the freedom movement. Baldwin was no remote observer. He accompanied Medgar Evers on harrowing voter registration drives. He marched with the Students of the Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, supported the efforts of the Congress of Racial Equality, fundraised with Dr. Martin Luther King. Writing from inside the fray, he keeps it concrete and gets to the heart of what troubles us.

Where to begin with your reading? I recommend **The Fire Next Time**, a slim collection of two essays, for starters. Buy a used copy (not from Amazon) and keep it on hand for frequent reference. **Go Tell it on the Mountain**, his semi-autobiographical novel, is a wonderful read. His essay "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood," offers relevant wisdom for our day.

The essay concludes with a truth Baldwin continually asserts:

But we are all androgynous, not only because we are born of a woman impregnated by the seed of a man but because each of us, helplessly and forever, contain the other — male in female, female in male, white in black and black in white. We are a part of each other. Many of my countrymen appear to find this fact exceedingly inconvenient and even unfair, and so, very often, do I. But none of us can do anything about it. Ω

Leib Chigrin



Easy Essay

by Peter Maurin

The world would be better off,
if people tried to become better.

And people would become better
if they stopped trying to be better off.

For when everybody tries
to become better off,
nobody is better off.

But when everybody tries
to become better,
everybody is better off.

Everybody would be rich
if nobody tried to be richer.

And nobody would be poor
if everybody tried to be the poorest.

And everybody would be
what he [or she] ought to be
if everybody tried to be
what he [or she] wants
the other [person] to be. Ω

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Ben Salmon: Catholic Pacifist

by Joan Thomas

Editor's note: Quotatios are from Torin R.T. Finney's 1989 biography **The Unsung Hero of the Great War: The Life and Witness of Ben Salmon**.

A devout Catholic with an eighth grade education, Ben Salmon mainly had office jobs, where he did well. He was handsome, somber, stubborn. What probably turned him to absolute pacifism was the 1914 Ludlow Massacre.

At that time, Ben worked for the Colorado and Southern Railroad. "On Easter night, news came to Denver that 13 children, a pregnant woman, and nearly a dozen men had been massacred by the Colorado National Guard in nearby Ludlow.... Striking coal miners were awakened that night when National Guardsmen surrounded the miners' camp, drenched their tents with oil, and set them on fire. The children and the expectant mother burned to death in the flames.... The incident was more atrocious to Salmon than any German cruelty in World War I.... Given his own efforts to organize a union at his job on the railroad, Ben began to see how easily violence became the method of the powerful in keeping the powerless in check."

Ben met Elizabeth Smith in 1908. After nearly 9 years of mild courting, they were married on October 9, 1917.

"Ben had been married less than three months when he received the Army Questionnaire in the mail on Christmas Day,1917.... When the military authorities confronted him with the question of what he would do should his wife be raped, his baby boy murdered, and his house burned to the ground by invading German troops, Ben answered, 'If I retained the faith that I have thus far had in God, and if I failed to save my wife and baby and our home, I would feel that I did more for my loved ones by remaining loyal to God than if I had violated God's laws. I have an abiding faith, however, that by returning good for evil I would save my baby's life, my wife's honor, and insure the safety of my home. Moreover, I would do more to save the lives and property of my fellow men than an army well-supplied with

instruments of destruction, for the simple reason that I would be on the side of God, and God is mightier than all the armies in the world combined."

Many Americans were shocked by President Wilson's decision to enter World War I in 1917 and more so when Congress passed the Espionage Act which imposed a $10,000 fine and/or twenty years in prison on anyone engaged in activities detrimental to the war effort.

Ben's court martial began in July 1918. He was offered a non-combatant military position, but turned it down because he believed all cooperation with the military was anti-Christian. He was sentenced to twenty-five years at hard labor. On October 9, 1918, his first wedding anniversary, he arrived at Leavenworth Federal Prison. One month later, on November 11, the First World War was over, but Ben Salmon's prison sentence had just begun.

He accepted a position as commissary clerk until he learned that much of the crops, cattle, and poultry raised by the prison farm was being sold to outside buyers, leaving what the inmates described as "a steamed and slimy flow of garbage." For leading protests, Ben was sent to solidary confinement in the dreaded hole: "small, dark, damp cells located directly over the prison's sewer system. Many contained no bed or blanket. The prisoners were expected to use a hole in the cell floor as a toilet. At night, they were tormented by bedbugs and rats."

On December 14, Ben was allowed a brief visit from his younger brother Joe, who was made to wait so long in the bitter cold that he came down with pneumonia and died shortly afterwards.

Despite his isolation and a diet of bread and water, Ben managed to continue his influence on the inmate strike for better food, a campaign which achieved its goals three weeks later.

Salmon spent six months in the hole. His physical health deteriorated, but his refusal to take noncombatant service and to work in the prison remained absolute. He described "petty persecutions.... Starvation, beatings, cold baths in zero weather, bayonetting."

On July 17, 1920, he began a hunger strike for "liberty or death," protesting being imprisoned for refusal to participate in "wholesale murder." After 12 days, he was force-fed milk. The hunger strike lasted until his release 135 days later.

Although he never fully recovered his health and had difficulty finding work with a dishonorable discharge from the Army, he enjoyed life with his wife and children. After Salmon died in 1932, his son Charles became a priest, daughter Margaret married, and daughter Geraldine joined the Maryknoll sisters.

"Father Francis Duffy, [honored in Times Square] famous chaplain of the Irish-American 'Rainbow Division,' wrote in 1923: 'War is something so opposed to God... so full of the Satanic.... Confined in prison, Ben Salmon single-handily assumed the responsibility of offering an alternative to the just war; he alone began the task of building Catholic pacifism as millions perished on the battlefields of Europe." Ω

Words of Wise Women

"If we want to reap the harvest of peace and justice in the future, we will have to sow the seeds of nonviolence here and now, in the present."

Mairéad Maguire (1944-)
Belfast, Northern Ireland, Co-Winner of the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize

"If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution."

Emma Goldman (1869-1940)
Russian-American anarchist and political activist

"Real courage is when you know you're licked before you begin, but you begin anyway and see it through no matter what."

Harper Lee (1926-2016)
American writer

"The beginning is always today."

Mary Shelley (1797-1851)
British Author of *Frankenstein*

"You must never so much think as whether you like it or not, whether it is bearable or not; you must never think of anything except the need, and how to meet it."

Clara Barton (1821-1912)
founder of the American Red Cross

"Live simply, so that all may simply live. The gate of heaven is very low; only the humble can enter it."

Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821)
founded the Sisters Charity
First American Catholic saint

"When explorers first encountered my people, they called us heathens, sun worshippers. They didn't understand that the sun is a relative and illuminates our path on this earth."

Joy Harjo (1951-)
(first Native American woman to be named US Poet Laureate)

"If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now that they are asking to do it, the men better let them."

Sojourner Truth (1826-1883)
American abolitionist

"Be as bold as the first man or woman to eat an oyster."

Shirley Chisholm (1924-2005)
United States Representative, first Black woman presidential candidate

"We all have a choice. We can create transformational action that will safeguard the living conditions for future generations. Or we can continue with our business as usual and fail."

Greta Thunburg (2003-)
Swedish Environmental Activist

"I'm no longer accepting the things I cannot change… I'm changing the things I cannot accept."

Angela Davis (1944-)
American political activist, author, and professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz

"If you are always trying to be normal, you will never know how amazing you can be."

Maya Angelou (1928-2014)
American author, poet, activist, and scholar

"Every moment is an organizing opportunity, every person a potential activist, every minute a chance to change the world."

Dolores Huerta (1930-)
American labor leader and civil rights activist, co-founder of the United Farm Workers.

"No matter how old I get, no matter how feeble, short of breath, incapable of walking more than a few blocks, what with heart murmurs, heart failures, emphysema perhaps, arthritis in feet and knees, with all these symptoms of age and decrepitude, my heart can still leap for joy as I read and suddenly assent to some great truth enunciated by some great mind and heart."

Dorothy Day (1897-1980)
co-founder, along with Peter Maurin, of The Catholic Worker Movement

Unum

(Continued from Page 1)

established and still maintains a blockade so extreme that Gaza is often described as "The world's largest prison."

The most recent Israeli elections, which brought Zionist extremists into the government, dispelled any doubt that a two-state solution to the conflict was Israel's plan. It is no longer uncommon to hear Israeli politicians call for the annexation of the entire West Bank.

This reality has led a consensus of international and Israeli human rights organizations to equate Israeli policy with apartheid. As sobering as that assessment is, like most appraisals of Zionistm, it is a day late and a dollar short. Apartheid led South Africa to create semi-independent bantustans for Blacks. The Palestinian Authority never enjoyed even semi-independence and now is seen by most Palestinians as collaborating in their oppression.

Israeli policy *vis a vis* Palestinians must be recognized for what it is: genocide. Since most people associate that crime only with the extermination of Jews during the Holocaust, they understandably reject that characterization, but we must remember that Raphael Lemkin, the Jewish lawyer who coined the term genocide and inspired the United Nations Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, defined the term more broadly. Article II says:

> *Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group, as such:*
>
> *(a) Killing members of the group;*
>
> *(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;*
>
> *(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.*

Lemkin and the United Nations recognized that the crime of genocide did not begin in Germany when the first Jews were murdered in ovens, but when anti-Semitic laws began years earlier. In order for the Convention to prevent genocide, action needs to be taken before a people are completely displaced or exterminated.

Unquestioning US military and economic support for Zionist Israel amounts to complicity in genocide. Having said that, we must never forget the nightmarish history and continued prevalence of anti-Semitism or the historic ties of the Jewish people to their ancestral homeland. Just as peace will never come to Northern Ireland through the replacement of Protestant domination with Catholic oppression, the anti-Holocaust mantra "Never Again" must mean "Never again to anyone." Witness how Americans are coming to the realization that everyone's history and culture, including those who lived here before European settlement, must be honored.

I remember years ago, my Jewish peace activist friend, Hattie Nestel, returned from a December visit to Israel and said, "It was wonderful not to be constantly assaulted by Christmas lights."

After another Jewish friend, Yael

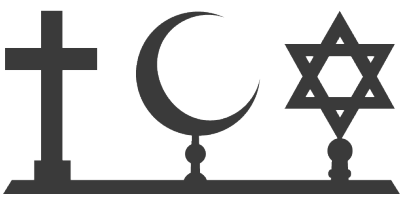
London, invited my wife Claire and me to come see her in a performance of Handel's "Messiah," we invited her and her husband, Murray, to attend Christmas Revels at Harvard University's Sanders Theater. They enjoyed the performance which wasn't overly religious. This year, though, much of my family went to a remarkable Revels which swirled around early 20th century Irish Catholic and Eastern European Jewish immigrants spending Christmas and Hanukkah on Ellis Island. The narrator opened with an acknowledgement of the many peoples to whom we are all indebted, including the Massachusetts Indians who lived on the land where Harvard's Sander's Theater now stands. The performance featured Irish and Jewish music and dance as well as a heart-wrenching ballad about the Christmas Eve truce during the First World War. Revels entertained and reinforced the idea that individual cultures shared between different groups enriches the entire community.

Discrimination, past and present, against Indians, Blacks, Asians, Jews, Latinos, Muslims, Catholics, women, and a host of others, besmirches our highest ideals, while consciousness of that wrongdoing propels us to do better in the future. A nation which boasts "E Pluribus Unum," (One out of many), should not prop up any ideology of ethnic, racial, or gender superiority. Our motto should never be "One over all."

Peace in the Holy Land, a place that is sacred to Jews, Muslims, and Christians, depends on mutual respect for everyone's goodness.

Thankfully, on January 6, thousands of Israelis (Jews, Muslims, and Christians), government's plans to increase Jewish settlements and diminish the prospect of democracy that respects every resident. The protest was led by left-wing and Arab members of the Israeli parliament. One of the banners read, "Housing, Livelihood, Hope." Some protesters carried rainbow flags. Participants called for peace and co-existence between Jewish and Arab residents of the country.

"We can see right now many laws being advocated for against LGBTQ, against Palestinians, against larger minorities in Israel," said Rula Daood of "Standing Together," a grass roots movement of Arabs and Jews. "We are here to say loud and clear that all of us, Arabs and Jews and different various communities inside of Israel, demand peace, equality, and justice." Ω



The Fourth Estate

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

In a time when news is often no longer than a 280-character tweet, the importance of in-depth investigative journalism is paramount. Without a vigorous free press, governments, corporations, military, and religious, and charitable institutions, as well as individuals can perpetrate grievous harm completely safe from public scrutiny. Four recent examples underscore this point.

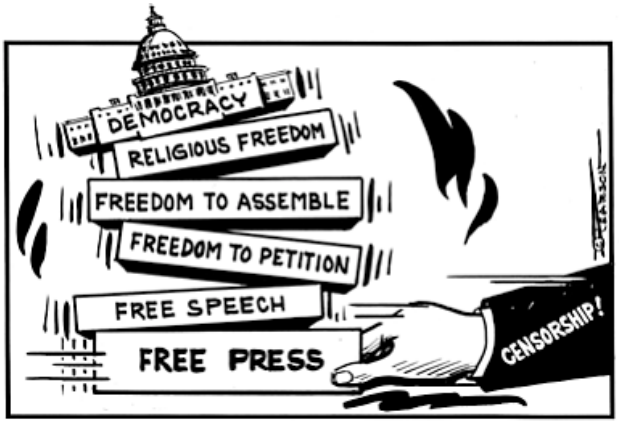
On December 12, 2022, *The New York Times* ran a 1,908-word, front-page article by Glenn Thrush entitled, "Some Prisoners Remain Behind Bars in Louisiana Despite Being Deemed Free" showing that "About 200 'freed' convicts languish in jail on any given month." Thrush tells us, "In most other states and cities, prisoners and parolees marked for immediate release are typically processed within hours," but Louisiana holds most for an extra 44 days and some as long as 90. No apology or compensation is given to the people kept in prison beyond their release date. William B. Most, an attorney in New Orleans who has filed class action lawsuits on behalf of over-detained inmates, said, "To our clients, it is an extremely scary experience because they do not know why they are being held, when they will be free, or how they can get free."

The practice, which the state blames on bureaucracy, costs Louisiana $2.8 million a year in unnecessary housing expenses. It also tends to happen more often to low income inmates of color.

In my personal experience, after a judge said I was free to go, that's exactly what happened. In Louisiana, when a judge orders someone released, the state does not even begin to file the required paperwork for ten days. In comparison with other states, this practice must be understood as both cruel and unusual, something prohibited by the United States Constitution.

While some tough-on-crime advocates might welcome extending jail time, Thrush made it clear that the practice increases disrespect for the plegal system and costs the taxpayers a fortune. *The New York Times* shined a spotlight on injustice that deserves immediate attention.

Another *New York Times* article, "When Military Training Is Not an Elective," by Mike Baker, Nicholas Bogei-Burroughs, and Illana Marcus, which appeared on December 11, 2022, exposed the fact that students in thousands of US schools are either required to take or are automatically enrolled in Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC). Commander Nicole Schwegman, a spokeswoman for the Pentagon and a former JROTC student herself, told *The Times*, "Just like we are an all-volunteer military, this program should be a volunteer program."



A follow-up article, on December 21, "Money for Military Instruction Gets the NRA (National Rifle Association) Inside Schools," detailed how JROTC enjoyed NRA grants for gun training and classroom instruction.

In a time when conservatives say classes or books on the history and continued prevalence of racism should be banned as anti-American brainwashing, a questionable claim, JROTC and the NRA are actually trying to promote pro-military and pro-gun agendas. Like the Louisiana delayed-prison-release practices, the vast majority of school districts which require JROTC are in nonwhite, low-income communities, despite the fact that gun violence is highest in those areas and there is no evidence that JROTC or the NRA increase discipline or discourage violence.

On December 10, 2022, *Science* released a new study entitled "Assessing ExxonMobil's global warming projections" which concluded:

"Our analysis shows that, in private and academic circles since the late 1970s and early 1980s, ExxonMobil scientists (i) accurately projected and skillfully modeled global warming due to fossil fuel burning; (ii) correctly dismissed the possibility of a coming ice age; (iii) accurately predicted when human-caused global warming would first be detected; and (iv) reasonably estimated how much CO2 would lead to dangerous warming. Yet, whereas academic and government scientists worked to communicate what they knew to the public, ExxonMobil worked to deny it."

Decades before climate change was irreversible, the oil giant hid the conclusions of its own scientists, lied to the public, and made billions producing lethal weather we now see so often.

A free press is vital for social justice. Were it not for *The Washington Post's* work on the Watergate break-in and cover-up, and the *Boston Globe's* exposure of the sex abuse scandal, the integrity of our political system and the Catholic Church might not have been rescuable.

In 1841, Scottish essayist, historian and philosopher, Thomas Carlyle wrote:"[Edmund] Burke said there were Three Estates [nobility, clergy, and commoners] in Parliament; but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important far than they all."

Amen to that. Ω

Letters

Democracy Now, 1/5/2023 headline: "Israel's New Far Right Gov't Entrenches Apartheid System with US Support"; a report of home, water supplies, and olive orchard destruction in the village of Masafer Yatta which displaced 1,000 Palestinians; and a fourth Palestinian shot and killed in the West Band five days into the new year.

Split screen: Joe Biden calling [Israeli Prime Minister] Benjamin Netanyahu his "friend."

Is this an alternate reality?

This matter troubles me deeply.

Destroying a family's home, water cisterns, and means of income, chiefly olive trees and crops, is a form of genocide. How could it be otherwise?

I witnessed evidence of this.

Destroying a home with bulldozers or missiles (Ukraine) is still terrorism.

Where is the outcry?

David Maher
North Brookfield, Massachusetts

Dear Catholic Workers,
I enjoyed the article on repatriation by the Barre Museum of [Native American] artifacts [from the massacre in 1890 at Wounded Knee]. The Barre Library was my childhood library and future beneficiary. I'm glad justice was done.

I also enjoyed the very inclusive holiday message from Scott.

You continue to inspire.... Catholic but also "Christian."

Phil Brewer
Rutland, Massachusetts

Dear Scott and Claire and all at Saints Francis & Thérèse,
Thanks again for another lovely read. I found the December/January issue very uplifting and appreciated your message of unity in God's family despite our diversity.

Thanks for your article "The Sign of the Cross," Scott. It rings so true that if we say "Yes," like Mary did, to what may seem unwise or asking for hardship, we say "Yes" also to the unknown blessings that follow. In this way, we can address injustices and speak out against wrongdoings, but stay uplifted in our faith that God and good prevail at the end of the day. Our role is to maintain our own integrity, not dictate an outcome!

I found "Mending History" very pertinent, Claire, since artifacts that make their way to museums have been on my mind. Friends of mine recently recreated an incredibly intricate and beautiful woven sail, the original of which is in a museum in England. How it came into European hands has been forgotten, but, as far as I know, it's the only remaining traditionally-made Maori sail—about 200 years old. The museum did allow Maori women to view and touch the sail to figure out how it was made, and will let it come here for a few months next year, but I know it's just one of thousands of artifacts taken with no respect or knowledge of their cultural significance. (The English originally thought it was a floor mat!) Mending history is a very attractive thought, but, on the other hand, I think history is irrevocably torn to shreds in colonized countries, and all we can hope to do is weave the pieces that remain with humility and try to mend the future by acknowledging past and present wrongs. Indigenous peoples have and do suffer on so many levels as a result of white-centric society! I find it incredible that [Maori] people like Cedric Nose and Violet Catches can so humbly and beautifully accept the drop-in-the-bucket returning of what was stolen and the voices of remorse. May these drops swell into a flood to cleanse us all into a new way of being! God bless!

Kiera Land
Whirinaki, Aotearoa
[Maori name for New Zealand]

Miracles

On December 17, Cloe Fields and her boyfriend, Christian Zelada, were taking a scenic drive through California's Angeles National Forest, when their car went over the edge of the mountain.

Zelada, 24, kept saying, "We're okay, we're okay, we're okay," until about halfway down, when he thought to himself: "This is it. This is how it's going to end."

But after the car landed — upside down and on the floor of Monkey Canyon 300 feet below — they quickly unbuckled their seat belts, crawled out of the vehicle, and checked each other for injuries but found nothing, just some small cuts and bruises. Ω

On January 3, in a possible murder/suicide attempt, a father drove his wife and children over a cliff at an area called Devil's Slide along California's Pacific Coast Highway. Their car flipped several times, and crashed right-side up on a rocky beach some 250 feet below. The children, a 9-year-old boy and a 4-year-old girl, both secured in car seats, were unharmed. The parents suffered non-life threatening injuries. Ω

Catholic Worker Calendar

February 1 & 15 March 8 & 22 — Evening Prayer: Please join us for prayer & Taizé chant. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow. 7 PM.

February 21— Running Massachusetts: Please come see a joyful encore slide show of Karen Pajer and Scott Schaeffer-Duffy's 351-day quest to run 5K (3.1 miles) in all 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow. 6:30 PM.

Mason Street Musings

It was early December and our hospitality at a slow trickle when a police officer called and asked if we had a bed for a 20-year-old male. James had been working the night shift laying, a gas line in the nearby town of Charlton and sharing a trailer with a young guy he described as his friend. When he borrowed his car one night to get to work, the "friend" accused James of stealing it. The allegation resulted in the loss of his job and a place to sleep in the trailer.

James was an industrious kid, going out each morning to look for work. After supper, he would retreat to his room, hoodie up, earbuds in his ears, and lie on his bed, one of his few certain comforts. It was hard to see someone so young fending for himself. James told us that aside from a year spent in New Hampshire with an uncle, who worked on nuclear submarines, he had been on his own since graduating from high school, working jobs up and down the east coast. One evening at supper, he said a trucking company in Maine might hire him. Two days later, he was gone, the room where he slept barely showing signs of his presence.

Loneliness is the greatest poverty,

Mother Teresa said. We have certainly seen it here. Guests whose loved ones have died. Guests estranged from their families. People without moorings, bobbing along unknown. James is among the youngest. I am praying he finds a trustworthy friend, someone who loves him reliably. We are not made for such a solitary existence.

While James was still with us, we hosted the Delmas, a refugee family from Haiti. Mother, father, a wide-eyed toddler, and three-year-old Davide. They had entered the US via Brazil, crossing ten countries before reaching Roxbury, Massachusetts, their intended destination. Their arrangements fell through. The little ones contracted a respiratory infection and spent nearly two months in a Boston hospital. The father said, "Even my wife was sick. It was very difficult."

Unlike James, the Delmas were not fending for themselves alone. The couple leaned on each other for support. You could see it in the way they silently read each other's signals, in how he helped with the baby while she worked the phone, figuring out where they would stay next. The hardships and travel had not wearied little Davide. Upon his family's arrival to Mason Street, he high-stepped his way up the hallway stairs as if he owned the place, as if he couldn't wait to discover what these new circumstances would bring. The next morning, I found him prancing around the cat, laughing at every move old Dexter made. Observing Davide's delight in the moment was one of this Christmas's most memorable gifts.

And now comes a new year with a big war and an old cause. The Ukrainian conflict has pushed fears of nuclear annihilation back into popular consciousness. These days, I find myself attending a lot of meetings on growing the movement for nuclear disarmament, a dominant peace issue when Scott and I were young Catholic Workers. Time is looping back on itself, I said to him. We are where we began, once again organizing, meeting, writing, praying, adding our small efforts to the collective one pushing humanity toward Life not Death. God gives new friends, resources, and inspiration for the task. Little Davide is dancing in the kitchen. Ω **Claire**

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